

## Friendship Heights TMD Advisory Committee Meeting

Summary – Meeting of July 10, 2007

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### Voting Members Present

Howard Byron	Town of Somerset
Bob Cope (Chair)	Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights
David Glass	Chevy Chase Village Board of Managers
Mary Herman	Polinger Shannon and Luchs (Employer of greater than 50)
Leslie Olson	Chevy Chase Land Company
Steven Robins, Esq.	Lerch, Early and Brewer, Representing Wisconsin Place
Carlean Russell	Saks Fifth Avenue (Employer of greater than 50)
Robert Schwarzbart	Friendship Heights Village Council
R. Mallory Starr	Somerset House Management Association
Garry Tyran	Eagle Bank (Employers of fewer than 50)

### Non-Voting Members Present

Sandra Brecher	DPWT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
Deborah Snead	Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center

### TMD Staff Present

Jim Carlson	DPWT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
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### Absent

Jessica Adams (Vice Chair)	The JBG Companies
Chief Roy Gordon	Chevy Chase Village Police
Leonard Grant	Friendship Heights Village Council
Capt. Wayne Jerman	Montgomery County Police
Charles Kines	M-NCPPC
Gregory Knoop	Oudens + Knoop Architects (Employer of fewer than 50)
Kenneth Williams	GEICO

### Guests

Judy Daniel	M-NCPPC
Julian Mansfield	Friendship Heights Village Manager
Jeffrey Slavin	Town of Somerset

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### Items 1, 2, & 3 – Welcome, Introductions, Review of Minutes, Chair's Comments:

**Chair Bob Cope** called the meeting to order.

**Mr. Cope** reminded the committee there is no August meeting.

The June 12, 2007, minutes were reviewed and approved with the following corrections:

**Leslie Olson** stated the June minutes stated that WMATA had submitted a contract to Chevy Chase Land Company (CCLC) to raise the bus station ceiling in two locations; in fact, there was no contract submitted. Thus far, only a markup of the plan of the affected areas has been submitted. The word "contract" in the June minutes was changed by agreement to "draft plan."

**Steven Robins** noted that, in reference to the Annual Growth Policy, the minutes state that full Council will hold public hearings June 27; public hearings are scheduled for June 19 and June 26. Minutes were amended to state that "Full Council will hold work sessions during the month of July."

**Item 4 – Bus Station Update:** **Jim Carlson** stated that communication from Stephen Petrucci, WMATA Bus Operations Supervisor, indicated that WMATA has met with the Montgomery County Fire Marshal regarding the activation of the station sprinkler system by certain buses. Metrobus drivers have been directed to turn off buses while standing in station.

**Ms. Olson** stated that the problem is not specifically that the buses are idling. The problem is that certain of the buses have a vertical exhaust that will immediately set off the alarm if near a sprinkler head. The

problems this causes are multiple: certain floors of the building need to be evacuated, the sprinkler head is fused and must be replaced each time it is activated, the Fire Marshal and the sprinkler company must certify the replacement of the heads and resetting the system. Ms. Olson noted that WMATA has been made aware of the vertical exhaust buses.

**Mr. Carlson** stated that he could clarify the issue with WMATA (bus idling vs. vertical exhaust). However, since WMATA has met with the Fire Marshal, it's expected that the source of the problem has been correctly identified and will be fixed.

**Ms. Olson** noted also that there is separate work still to be done by WMATA to reconfigure the ceiling to accommodate the clearance needs of buses. Earlier attempts by a contractor to adjust the ceiling panels in some areas have left wide openings around some of the sprinkler heads, impairing their operation.

**Ms. Olson** added that Metrobuses are frequently seen parked along Wisconsin Circle. Buses have also started to park on both sides of the Circle recently. The parked buses block visibility; at the same time, buses are traveling through the Circle on the open lanes. This creates a hazard for pedestrians, many of whom cut across the Circle at mid-block. The station manager does not seem to be on site during those times the parked buses have been seen.

**Mr. Carlson** said he would forward the photos taken during May and July of Metrobuses parked on the Circle (included in meeting packet) to Stephen Petruccelli, WMATA Bus Operations Supervisor.

**Item 5 – Taxi Stand:** **Mr. Carlson** stated that DPWT is in favor of closing the Willard Avenue stand at some point in the future but, per the letter from Director Holmes (included in meeting packet), the Wisconsin Circle stand must first be completely operational. Closing the Willard Avenue stand before the operation of the Wisconsin Circle stand has been established could leave the community with no taxi stand. One primary difficulty that will remain once the directional signs are in place is the possible reluctance of drivers to participate with the call button arrangement.

**Mr. Cope** noted that drivers will not use the Wisconsin Circle stand as long as the Willard stand, which on some days has as many as eight cabs lined up, is still in operation. Mr. Cope added that DPWT is failing to adopt or is destroying many of the amenities in the Friendship Heights Sector Plan, such as the proposed streetscape, crosswalks, and has not yet opened the Transit Store. Mr. Cope added that it should be within the power of the County to compel drivers to use the Wisconsin Circle stand, using the power to grant taxi licenses.

**Robert Schwarzbart** added that the most obvious solution is to allow the taxis back on Wisconsin Circle, where they have the most visibility. If a traffic lane is going to be blocked anyway, then it may as well be on the Circle, instead of the more heavily traveled Willard Lane.

**Mr. Cope** agreed that the ultimate location of the taxi stand may be back on Wisconsin Circle, but said every effort should first be expended to make the current arrangement work, since it is the recommendation in the Sector Plan.

**Mr. Schwarzbart** suggested that the addition of a call box instead of a call button would ultimately make more sense, since the button arrangement provides no feedback to a customer indicating a cab has been called. Since there are four cab companies now operating in the county, multiple call boxes may be needed.

**ACTION ITEM:** A motion was made to write a letter to Council President Marilyn Praisner, asking that the DPWT decision to continue operation of the Willard Avenue stand be revisited. The letter will be circulated by email for approval.

[The letter was postponed per Chair Bob Cope, to allow more time for the Wisconsin Circle stand to become operational. Signs have been ordered, and DPWT is working with DDOT and SHA to place the signs on Wisconsin Avenue and Western Avenue.]

**Comment:** Change to minutes per meeting of 9.11.07

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**Item 5 – Enhanced FH Shuttle Service:** **Howard Byron** stated that he is willing to work with the committee past the completion of his term to help put together a proposal for the shuttle. Mr. Carlson was to have met with Mr. Byron prior to the meeting, but there was a miscommunication. Discussions will continue on this issue.

**Mr. Cope** suggested that a meeting be arranged between interested committee members and Phil McLaughlin, Ride On, to look at options for enhanced shuttle service.

**Item 6 – Other Business**

**Mr. Cope** asked when the biennial report will be printed. Mr. Carlson stated that he was waiting for additional comments from the review subcommittee. If no further comments come in, the report will be sent for print as soon as possible, with a goal of getting it to print during July/August. Subsequent reports will be started shortly thereafter in order to bring the report period up to date.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50.

Next meeting date: September 11, 2007.